

SOME ASPECTS OF MEDICAL LIFE IN OLD GLASGOW.

BY

HUGH A. M'LEAN, M.B.

Reprinted from the "Glasgow Medical Journal," September, 1912.

GLASGOW:

PRINTED BY ALEX. MACDOUGALL, 70 MITCHELL STREET.

1912.

SOME ASPECTS OF MEDICAL LIFE
IN OLD GLASGOW.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

<https://archive.org/details/b24920770>

SOME ASPECTS OF MEDICAL LIFE IN OLD GLASGOW.

BY

HUGH A. M'LEAN, M.B.

Reprinted from the "Glasgow Medical Journal," September, 1912.

GLASGOW:

PRINTED BY ALEX. MACDOUGALL, 70 MITCHELL STREET.

1912.

GLASGOW
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

Some Aspects of Medical Life in Old Glasgow.¹

BY HUGH A. M'LEAN, M.B.

IN all probability the healing art was introduced into our city co-temporary with the arrival of the monastic orders, and from records which have been preserved we know that the members of some Continental monasteries required not only to be shaved but also bled at regular intervals—"Septembri, ante adventum, ante quadragesima, post pascha et post pentecost"—hence the monks included in their numbers certain persons who could shave and bleed as required, and thus arose the profession of barber-surgeons, whose association is still set forth by the striped pole displayed from many a barber's door in our own city; the striping of the pole representing the ribbon or bandage tied round the limb about to be bled, while the pole was simply the staff which was firmly grasped by the patient during the

¹ An Address delivered to the Glasgow Eastern Medical Society, 6th December, 1911.

operation. There is little doubt, moreover, that these skilled monks—who probably looked for no reward on this planet—would perform like services for the poorer inhabitants of the infant city; but as the burgh increased in size and dignity there would gradually arise a demand for a skilled profession to deal with all the ills which the human flesh is heir to.

Probably the first direct reference to a practitioner in Glasgow is that contained in the accounts of the customers of the burgh of Linlithgow, 1393-1395, where there is a remission made by order of the king to William, physician of Glasgow; also an order for payment of £2, 13s. 4d. to the same person. Then follows a long period during which, so far as I am aware, no reference is made anywhere to the presence of a physician or surgeon in our city, until 1505, when, in the Protocol book of Cuthbert Simon, there is mentioned, in connection with the sale of an annual rent, one John Murref, "cirurgion."

Probably the first authentic information, however, concerning medical life in Old Glasgow is contained in a minute of council dated 17th May, 1577, which reads thus:

The proueste, baillies, and counsall understandand the supplicatioun gewin in be Alexander Hay, chirurgian, quhairby he is myndit to remane in this toune, being in redyness for serwing of the towne in his craft and art, thairfor for his support thai haif grantit . . . ane yierlie pensioun to him of ten merks money and attour the said Alexander for service bigane is maid burges and frieman of the burgh and citie of Glasgow and sall paye na manner of taxt in tyme cuming conforme to the preuilege haid be the umquhile Jas. Abernethie hes maister.

We gather from this minute that even at this early date a surgeon was in receipt of a retaining fee and, as a further inducement to reside in the town, he was presented with his burges ticket. Glasgow would now be a town of some five thousand inhabitants, and it is not to be expected that one medical man could give adequate care and attention to so many people—albeit they would probably be healthy specimens—and a few years later we find reference to another surgeon:

7th Mch., 1580.—Archibald Davidson, flescher, is maid burges and frieman quhais fynes wes gewin to Thomas Mylne, chirurgian, for his cureing of Thomas Muir hurt in the tounes besynes.

Mylne also decided to reside in Glasgow, and in January, 1588, we find a record that

The baillies, counsall, deaconis and remanent friemen comburgessis of the burgh and citie of Glasgow convenit in the tolbuith thair of . . . for rousing the lands . . . imprimis biddin be Thomas Myln, chirurgen, for the Mylnedameheid, Peitbog and Dassiegrene the soume of ellevin hundreth merkis.

From the accounts of the burgh of Glasgow, 1590, in "the rentall of the new revin-out lands of Mylndamheid, Peitbog and Dassiegrene" we find this item:

The Mylndamheid occupiit be Thomas Myln, chirurgin, 13/4d. Item, the Peitbog and Dassiegrene occupiit be the said Thomas, 6/8.

This was probably the sum payable in name of feu-duty. Fully sixty-seven years after this (1657) there appears a similar entry, viz.:

Thomas Mylne for Peitbog and Dassiegrene, 6/8d.

While it is possible, this is most unlikely to be the same Thomas Mylne, and was probably a son (an additional note of this is taken further on). Mylne knew, like the majority of us, what it was to work for nothing, and the next extract relates to a case which Mylne attended, and when he sent in his bill the person to whom it was rendered repudiated liability:

Thomas Kneland is absolvit fra the soume of fyve marks sex schillings allegit promittit be the said Thos. Kneland to Thomas Myln, chirurgane, for the cureing of William Dowglass, sone to Johnne Dowglass of Harwood, and that in respect of the said Thos. Knelandis aith gevin thairupon, referrit thairto be the said Thomas Myln.

Dr. Mylne, however, did not confine his activities to surgery and the simple life, but, as we see below, he felt constrained to express an opinion on certain men and matters—to his own undoing:

3rd June, 1589.—In presens of the Provost, baillies and counsall, comperit Thomas Myln, chirurgene, being accusit be James Flemyng and James Stewart, baillies, for calling of thame [tratouris] and dissavearis and speiking sclanderouslie of the toun [calling] it hungrie toun of Glasgow. The said Thomas confessit [that he callit certane] of the saidis baillies treasonable dissevaris . . . and he became in the prouest, baillies and counsallis will for [the said] offence: wha declarit immediatlie thair will that [be resoun] of his odious and grit offence and sclander . . . and for giving of utheris example to abstene fra the lyk heireftir thai statut and

ordanit that the said Thomas Myln shall compeir at the croce and thair confess oppenlie in presens of the people, his fault and grit sclander committit be him . . . and thaireftir his pension to be dischargit during the space of ane yeir.

I come across an interesting item at this same date. This is where a certain Johnne Park—it does not say if he was a surgeon or not: sometimes the title was omitted—having promised to cure Helene M'Neill of a disease from which she suffered, for the sum of "fyve marks," he took the "fyve marks" to begin with, but did not cure Helen of her trouble; and this is a record of the decision ordering him "to rediliver to hir the said soume back agane."

As there is no notice in the burgh records of the decease of the Alexander Hay already mentioned, we may assume that he was still alive, and that Dr. Mylne was in receipt of a retaining fee as well. In point of fact, the council seemed to be quite impartial in their patronage, as new names are continually appearing:

On 23rd April, 1596, James Pawtone, merchand, is maid burges . . . quhais fines are remitted gratis be the baillies and counsale to Allaster M'Caslan, chirurgeane, for his service done be him in cureing of sundry puir anes in the toune and for his service to be done in tyme coming.

There were, however, other physicians in Glasgow at this date, for in the Protocol books of the town-clerks we find, in connection with the sale of "40s. lands at Overshiells, Kilbryde, Shire of Lanark, in the dwelling of the Subdean of Glasgow on 2nd February, 1598, at 2 P.M.," that one of the witnesses to the transaction was Mr. Robert Hamilton, of Craighorn, "medico"; and on 13th February, 1598, at 8 A.M., in connection with some property part of the marriage settlement of Dr. Anderson, writer, to his future spouse, Margaret Scharp, we find that the resignation was witnessed by Adam Flemyng, "chirurgo." Under similar conditions Dr. Flemyng introduces us to a celebrated townsman and his future spouse. I shall give this extract:

26th May, 1599, 3 p.m.—James Lyone, merchant citizen, sold to Maister Peter Low, chirurgiun, and Grissel (Grisselledem) Pollart, spouses, a fore tenement under and above with a waste house adjoining, being part of a tenement fore and back with yard and pertinents, some time belonging to the umquhill Matthew Heriot, lying on the west side of the street leading from the Metropolitan Church to the Market Cross. Witness, Adam Flemyng, surgeon.

Lowe was also in receipt of a civic pension or retaining fee, as by minute of 17th March, 1599, "it is aggreit of new and contractit betwixt the toune and Docta Low for xxiv merkis money be yeir." He was a native of Scotland—probably a native of Glasgow; at least we know that in 1590 he had a brother, John, resident in the city. In the introduction to his *Discourse of the whole Art of Chirurgerie* he says that he had practised in France and Flanders for twenty-two years, thereafter being chirurgian-major to the Spanish regiments at Paris for other two years. "Next," he says, "I followed the French king my master in the warres 6 years, where I took commoditie to practice all points and operations of chirurgerie."

He settled in Glasgow in 1597 or 1598, and as the Protocol, already quoted, informs us he purchased on behalf of himself and his wife a dwelling on the west side of High Street. Grissil Pollart, his wife, pre-deceased him, and he married again, this time a daughter of Mr. David Wemyss, the minister of Glasgow. He was thus a man of some education, well read, conversant with the teachings of the Continental schools, and no doubt possessed of that broad outlook on life which extensive travel generally brings to a mature mind.

Whether it was due to the expression of opinions derived from his experiences of life abroad or not we cannot say, but we know that very shortly after his arrival in the city he said or did something which brought him under the ban of the kirk session, and he had to "stand the pillar" three times. It is quite obvious, moreover, that when Lowe arrived in Glasgow, in addition to the few regular practitioners, there were others "as quacksalvers, charlatans, witches, charmers, and divers other sorts of abusers," but the most part of them "lacke both soul and conscience and feare of God . . . promising marvails to cure all things in short space," and, to make it more plausible, they entrelace scripture. So notorious had this become that the session proposed to take action, and a committee composed partly of the councillors and partly of ministers was appointed

To examinat and tak tryall of all sic persounes as usit or sal happin to use the arte [*i.e.*, medicine or surgery] within this toune in time cumying.

It has been suggested that the session took this step on Lowe's advice, but I think that this is hardly likely, as Lowe, being but human, was probably not over well disposed

towards the body which had so recently subjected him to the indignity of the pillar; not only so, but Lowe, in all probability spurred by this action of the session, immediately took steps to procure from the King the "Letter of Gift" which founded the Faculty—now the Royal Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons in Glasgow. This was granted to "Mr. Peter Low, our chirurgiane and chief chirurgiane, to our dearest son, the Prince," with the assistance of Mr. Robert Hamilton, professor of medicine, and authorised them

To call, summon, or convene before them . . . all persons . . . using the said art of chirurgerie, and to examine them upon their literature, knowledge and practice, and if they be found worthy to admit . . . and to discharge them to use ony further than they have knowledge passing their capacity least our subjects be abused.

It also authorised or instructed them to visit every hurt, murdered, poisoned, or any other person taken away extraordinary, and enacted that "no manner of person sell any drugs, except the same be sighted by William Spang, apothecary," and it further enacted that the visitors of the newly constituted faculty "shall convene on the first Monday of each month at some competent place to visit and give counsel to poor diseased folks gratis.

Lowe was evidently a man who possessed in great degree the confidence and respect of his fellows, and when the Duke of Lennox was appointed Ambassador to France

At the special request and desire my Lorde Duke's grace the council . . . gevis licence to Maister Peter Lowe, chirurgian, to pass in company with my Lord Duke, and dispenses with his absence . . . and that he may injoy his pensione . . . quhill . . . the said tyme as sal happin his Lordschip to returne.

At the end of 1604, in the conference between the representatives of the merchants and crafts which resulted in the "Letter of Gildrie," one of the spokesmen from the crafts was Maister Peter Lowe, and in 1605 in the Protocol book of Archibald Heygail we find that Lowe received an instrument of sasine "as attorney for and in the name of the Crafts Hospital of a house outwith the North Port." He died in 1610, and was buried in the High Kirkyard.

At the period with which we are dealing surgeons were practically free from taxation. This arrangement may have been quite satisfactory and fair in the earlier stages of the city's history, but now it became somewhat burdensome

and inequitable, and a minute of council (5th November, 1605), sets forth that—

Sundry persons had refused to pay their stent . . . but pretendis exemptione thairfra, specially mediciners, chirurgiounes, barbouris, procuratoris, messingers, notteris and sic uthers,

and the council therefore enacted

That all sic persounes quha usis ony frie libertie within this burgh . . . sall be subject to pay stent.

As was to be expected, such a valuable privilege was not yielded up without a struggle, and the subject crops up every now and again. In April, 1635, the council are warning “the visitour of the chirurgians anent their stent.” Things dragged on until 1693. On 3rd November of that year a petition was presented to the council by the chirurgians and pharmacians,

Craveing to be free of stent and other public burdens conforme to this gift granted to them by King James the Sixth, and thereafter confirmed by Parliament.

The council appointed a small committee consisting of the Provost, two past Provosts, the Dean of Guild, with the Deacon Convener, and another to consider and report. This report I have not been able to discover, but the finding was evidently not favourable to the surgeons, as a search of the records of the decisions of the Lords of Session¹ reveals the fact that on 17th July, 1694, a stated case came up for on appeal—

The Surgeon Apothecaries of Glasgow contra the Magistrates thereof in a suspension on a declarator of exemption and immunity from paying cess in regard that King James VIth in his letter of priviledges excerned them in 1599 from all warding, watching stents and taxations, both for their skill and because they had the inspection of the Apothecaries drugs for the 5 neighbouring shires, and so it was onerous. That the same was ratified by Parliament in 1672. The Magistrates answered that the publick Act of Parliament derogated from all private exemptions. The Lords found that the Chirurgians could plead no exemption from the present cesses, and therefore repelled their declarator and decerned accordingly.

This decision seems so emphatic that one might be surprised to find that the matter did not end there, as on 27th October, 1784—

¹ Lauder's *Decision of the Lords of Council and Session*.

The Magistrates and Toun Council anent the petition given in to them be John Boyd, pretendit visitor of the faculty of chirurgians and pharmacians, shewing that they are ordinarily warned be the toun's officers to weapon-shawing, watching and warding with the other inhabitants of the burgh albeit they are not liable thereto; firstly, because the same is inconsistent with their employments of chirurgerie and pharmacie, being operations on the bodys of men and dispensing of medicines to them which in a great many particulars are ordinarily daily occurrences, and can admit of no delay without hazard of lyfe or the danger of the health of the patient which the petitioners conceive is sufficient ground for exemption, especially considering the paucity of their number in such a populous place as this; and secondly, that they were privileged with these immunities by ane particular gift in favours of them and their predecessors by King James VI, confirmed by Parliament, and therefore craving that the Toun Officer might be discharged to warne the petitioners to any weapon-shawing, etc.

The Magistrates with the Dean of Guild and the Deacon Convener after consideration recommended

That the chirurgians and pharmacians should be liable to watching and wardings in respect that they are incorporate with the barbers in a deaconrie, and that by their burgess oath they are bound to all taxations, watchings and wardings, as also in respect that they keep shops and open trafique of trade, and take prentices who by their apprenticeship have the privilege of burges and gildbrother as well as prentices of other merchants or traders. Which report being heard the Magistrates and Toun Council approved thereof, and doe find and declare that the chirurgians and pharmacians of this burgh are lyable to the watchings and wardings with the other inhabitants when required and appoynts the magistrates present to come and see performance accordingly.

This has been somewhat of a digression, and now we get back to our subject proper. Our first duty is to note with regret that the records of the kirk session for 1620 inform us that one, "Dr. Ross—trilapse in fornication—was passed, having paid 100 merks to the poor." The title "doctor," however, did not necessarily imply that its possessor was a member of the medical profession. The masters of the Grammar School, for instance, were generally referred to as "doctor," and for the sake of example we hope that in this case Dr. Ross was not a disciple of Æsculapius.

I do not intend quoting the very frequent extracts of this period, which show that the city fathers still deemed it desirable to encourage medical men to settle in Glasgow by presenting them with their burgess ticket, but to remark

that the next minute—typical of many others—indicates that the council were fairly generous to citizens who had been unfortunate:

28th February, 1640.—Ordanes the thesaurer to pay to Johnne Cors twenty markes to helpe to pay for the curing of his sone's leg that was cut from him.

Further, we have information that the barbers on occasion did more than bleed the citizens:

Malcolm M'Lauchlan being convict for hurting and bluiding of John Patersoune and haifand na thing to mak satisfactioun to the said John Patersoune nor yet to the barbour quha curit him, is banist this toune, and gif evir he be fund in this toune to be nait be the lug to the trone except he pay the said John xxLi for hurting and curing him.

While engaged recently in some research in the Register House in Edinburgh I came across the will of a local practitioner, Andrew Mylne by name, dated 31st August, 1635. He died in October of the same year. In the inventory his household furniture is valued at £50. He left a good many unpaid (to him) accounts—items such as this:

Johne Flemyng in Murray, for cureing of him of ane wound, £33, 6s. 8d.; Cuthbert Hamilton of Cadder, of cureing him of ane greit wounde in the heid and for furnessing him the time of cure, £66, 13s. 4d.; umquhill Wallace of Elderslie and . . . Wallace his son, for curing him of ane wounde in the leg, £33, 6s. 8d.

There was due to him also £45, 13s. 4d., a sum or sums which he had loaned. He evidently acted as a sort of factor to the Castlemilk estates, and had collected or uplifted money to the extent of £226, 2s., which he or his executors had paid over. There was in all a balance in his favour of £125, 16s. 7d., which does not seem a large sum to spend a lifetime in amassing. After commending himself to God Almighty, his Creator, he appointed trustees, including Provost Patrick Bell; also tutors for Andrew and Marion Mylne, his bairns (being, I expect, under age). He likewise appointed these tutors and other two as overseers to the said "bairnes," and to "Thos. and Elspeth, my other two bairnes, to see the gear employit to ther weill." He left to James Hamilton, a son-in-law, 200 merks; to Jean Mylne, his natural daughter, £40; to the Crafts Hospital, 40 merks; to the Merchants Hospital, £20; to Margaret Sommer, his spouse, the "next

best sylver piece quhilk shoe accepts in satisfioun of all the $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{3}$ pairt of the haill sylver wark"; the next best to James Hamilton, his son-in-law; and to Elspeth Mylne "the warst sylver piece."

He must have been twice married, as there is a will of Marion Hall, spouse to Andrew Mylne, chirurgion. She died 16th August, 1632, three years before him. She had a small holding, and left to her husband "the haill ground under pease and oats, twa kye and the household goods and plenishing," amounting to £257, 13s. 4d. She was owed also £470, 13s. 4d., and she owed £154, 3s. 4d. Her will was witnessed by Thos. Myln, son to Andrew Mylne. Her husband was sole executor, with a request that "he would do his duty to her bairns according to her estate."

In the early part of this paper, while speaking of Thos. Myln in connection with the land he rented at Peitbog, &c., I mentioned that sixty-seven years later, which would be 1697, there was a similar entry. Now it is quite possible, even probable, that the Thos. Mylne referred to then is this Thomas Mylne, who would thus be a nephew of the Dr. Milne who slandered the provost and baillies.

We now make the acquaintance of a practitioner or practitioners who played a not unimportant part in the history of our city. This is John Hall, surgeon. So far as one can judge from the material available, the Halls were an old Glasgow family. The name occurs frequently in the Protocol books of the town clerks, *e.g.*, Bailie John Hall (I shall show you the significance of this title in a little) gives sasine of various properties—14th December, 1548, 13th August, 22nd November, 18th December, 1549, and very frequently thereafter. Now, in connection with the sale of a tenement on the west side of the High Street (6th December, 1598, 10 A.M.) one of the witnesses was "John Hall, chirurgio," who resided on the north side of the Trongate. However, the first extract to which I desire to refer is dated 1633, where payment of £8, 14s. is made to "Johne Hall, chirurgiane, for the cureing of ane puir boy's arme." Now, in 1642, there died another John Hall, "chirurgian." The John Hall to whom we are referring died in 1698. In 1719 died a "John Hall, chirurgian, son of the deceased John Hall, chirurgian." This deceased John Hall must have died between 1717 and 1719, as in the will of the junior Dr. Hall there is a bond for £150 by Robert Lord Blantyre to John Hall, elder, "chirurgian," dated 4th August, 1715. This was assigned by John Hall, elder, to his son on 28th June, 1717,

which meant that Dr. Hall, elder, was living at that time, but he was deceased by 1719, and in the *Glasgow Courant* for 19th January, 1748, there was an advertisement—"For sale, the haill of that laigh fore shop or booth next to and on the north side of the Tolbooth of Glasgow [and I desire you to remember this spot carefully], which belonged to the deceased John Hall, surgeon."

This, however, is another digression, and we must revert to the John Hall who specially concerns us. I desire to reintroduce him through another minute of council:—

28th August, 1648.—Ordaines the thesaurer to have ane warrand for the soume of ane hundreth merkis money debursit bi him to Johnne Hall, chirurgcoune, for his service in attending the magistrates at all tymes anent the pestilence.

And in October of the same year—

Fourtie pundes in compleat payment of his haill paynes takine bi him in sighting all those wha were under suspicioune of the pestilence in respect he tuik naething fra nae maner of persoune, naither fra poore nor rich for his paynes.

He was evidently a *persona grata*; but another extract of this nature will suffice:—

29th January, 1653.—Ordaines the thesaurer to pay to John Hall twentie merkis for cureing ane poore woman's arme of twa great ulsters, in regard sche was lyklie to have lost the same, and thairby become burdensome to the toune, being ane burges bairne.

Not only did the council subsidise acting practitioners, but from a minute of 23rd April, 1653, we find that they were also willing to stretch out a helping hand to those who had fallen by the way, as on that date £20 is paid to "Andrew Muir, chirurgen, for his helpe and supplie in this his present distressit estate."

In 1656 the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons craved to have their "Letter of Gift" supplemented by a "Seal of Cause." The town council appointed the Deacon Convener and the Dean of Guild to consider "as to the articles to be continit thairintill," and on 16th August, 1656, a letter of Deaconhead was granted to the surgeons and barbours on the request of John Hall, their "heidisman or dekene."

In the accounts of the burgh for 1668 we find this item—"To John Hall, the toun's chyrurgian, £66, 13s. 4d." He succeeded one James Frank in this position. Frank, whose

nature was evidently not quite so satisfactory as his name, had been appointed "toun's physician" on 23rd January, 1658.

The saids magistrates and counsell did transact and agrie with James Frank, chirurgioun, in this manner to witt: he to retorne againe to this burgh and mak his residence thairin for exercizing of his calling, and they bind them to pay to him yeirlie ane hundrethe merkis Scottis, the toun paying for the drogis and medicamentis."

And the average amount of the drug bill is set forth in a further minute of 25th July, 1663, which ordains the "thesaurer" to have

Ane warrand for the soume of threttie eight pundis 4 shillings debursit bi him to James Frank for drogs, plaisters and utheris [medicamentis] bestowed bi him upon the curing of divers poor persons.

It is evident from this minute that Dr. Frank had already been resident in Glasgow, as he is to "retorne againe to the city." He seems, however, to have been a restless, unsettled mortal, and in June, 1667, we read that

The magistrates and counsell taking to their consideratione how that James Frank, their commoune chyrurgian, had desertit his charge and left the toun contrair his obleisment, . . . and seeing how necessar it is that ane uther be appoyntit to supplie that charge, thai have therfor made choyse of Johne Hall, chyrurgian, to have that place.

Hall had evidently made a little money, but, unlike our old friend, Thomas Myln, he did not put it all into real estate—although we find that he owned or tenanted lands at Garngad and Hartisfield—but he favoured "property," and on 10th June, 1669, we read that

In answer to the supplicatioun given in bi Johne Hall, chyrurgian, grantis license to him to build ane piece of ane stone wall, betwixt theis buiths nerrest the Tolbuith, quhilk he hes laitly bought, and the gutter ther, for withholding the evil smell of the said gutter.

Like others of that easy-going age, Dr. Hall was not troubled with a public health conscience; but the point I am most interested in is this description of his property, as there is no possible doubt that this refers to the same property as the advertisement in the *Courant* for 1748, which speaks of the "haill of that laigh fore shop next to

and on the north side of the Tolbooth of Glasgow, which belonged to the deceased John Hall, surgeon."

Now, at this time Manasses Lyall, the deacon convener, died, and Dr. Hall was elected to that office; but the honour was short-lived, as the council discovered that, "by the old laudable use and custom," the person who ought to have been elected was the immediate deacon convener before, and on 9th October, 1669, they therefore rescinded their act appointing Dr. Hall to the office, and elected John Miller to the position. However, the next extract shows that Dr. Hall had at last come into his kingdom. This is dated 30th September, 1673, and reads—

In the leet presented by the Provost to Robert, Archbishop of Glasgow, he did nominat two of the merchant rank and Johnne Hall for the crafts to be the thrie baillies for the said year enshewing,

and that this refers to John Hall "of ours," so to speak, is attested by another minute [24th September, 1674], which

Ordaines the thesaurer to have ane warrant for thrie score eightine punds 12/ Scotis payit to John Hall, Baillie, for drogs furnished bi him to poor people in the toun.

John Hall, bailie, probably the first medical magistrate, although we read that there was a John Hall, surgeon, and a John Hall, bailie, about 1550-1580, who were possibly the same person. In point of fact, when we remember that the council was really composed of the ruling families in the city—the old council electing the new council—we come across the same names constantly recurring, which are indications that these positions were often passed on from one generation to another. Be that as it may, I feel sure that Bailie John Hall, "chirurgian," would always conduct himself as a physician and a gentleman. He was a virile old man, and in 1685 we have other two references to him, one in August ordering payment to

John Hall, elder, for dressing the late Argyle, Rumbold Thos. Archer, and one poor dutchman the tyme they were prisonees in the Tollbuith,

And in the same year he was re-appointed bailie as one of the crafts representatives. Although still in harness he had evidently resigned his appointment as "toun's physician" on his elevation to the magistracy, and in October, 1674, the magistrates made "choyse of John Robesoune, chirurgiane,

to have that place as the toune's chyrurgian quhillk was last occupied bi John Hall." In 1689 he was appointed along with the Dean of Guild "to be present to dispose of the seats in the churches to the burgesses and inhabitants," and nine years later there is probably the final minute—

Sir John Houstoune of that ilk is now liveing in the burgh, and that it is needful that a seat in some church be provided for him and his family, the magistrates do therefor appoynt to him that seat in the Tron Church, lately possessed bi the umquhile John Hall, late Bailie.

This is presumably our old friend, and taking his age as 21 in 1633, the year in which we make his acquaintance, would give the probable date of birth as 1612—1612 till 1698—an old man 86 years old, a long and I think useful life, sixty-five years of which were spent in the pursuit of his calling. *R.I.P.*

Reverting back for a few moments, I desire to notice a petition presented to the magistrates on 13th September, 1679, by one Mr. Harie Marschell, complaining "that the chirurgians and fermacians had refused to admit him frie of their craft." The magistrates ordained intimation to be made to the chirurgeons to see if they had anything to say on the matter, failing which they [the magistrates] "make certification that the toun will grant him licence to sett up." Ten days later the case was discussed by the Deacon Convener and the deacons of the trades, who decided by a majority of votes that "the said Harie Marschall should be admitted frie with the said incorporation of chyrurgians as from 26th August last." They presented this finding to the visitor and masters of the said calling, but as they did not appear to defend the action of the surgeons the deacon convener granted to the said "Harie Marschall full power and libertie to sett up and exercise his calling."

Fully twelve years after this the Faculty appealed against this decision on the grounds that "Harie Marschall had not served his apprenticeship with a freeman or member of the facultie for five years," and on the 6th May, 1691, the former act in favour of Hary Marshall was set aside. This did not, however, hinder Mr. Marshall from being as busy as ever, as on 15th June, 1700, a petition was presented to the Provost by Mr. George Lockhart and Mr. Henry Marshall, chirurgion, desiring him to convene the town council, the trades and merchants houses, in order to prepare a petition for presentation to Parliament—

For the securitie of our religion, the suppressing of vice, and encouragement of pietie and virtue, and asserting the Company's right to their settlement in Caledonia in which this city is much interested.

I think this has reference to the ill-fated Darien scheme. He occupied a seat, as we learn from the accounts of the burgh, in the new church, *i.e.*, the Ramshorn. Several members of the profession worshipped there, Dr. Baird, Dr. Kennedy, Dr. Thos. Hamilton, and in the burgh accounts for 1711 there is this curious entry—

21st March.—Putting up seat to the midwives in the New Kirk :
2 men 3 days, £4 0 0.

In 1700 this Harie Marshall is actually appointed visitor to the surgeons, and conducted the negotiations relative to disjoining the surgeons and barbers at that time. He was still in Glasgow in 1708, as in that year we find him arranging with a mason to “rebuild some shops near the cross, lately burned and ruinous.”

I think I mentioned already that Dr. John Hall was succeeded in the “*towne's physeanship*” by Dr. Robesoune. He was also a member of the town council. In October, 1678, there is a minute which refers to “John Robesoune, thesaurer,” and that it was the same person is evident from a minute of 24th May, 1679, which

Ordains the thesaurer to have ane warrand for the soume of ane hundredth threttie ane pundis Scotis for drogs and medicaments furnished bi himself to poor people.

Dr. Robesoune did not hold the appointment long, as on 29th December, 167(7)? 9—

The Provost, baillies and counsell . . . taking to their consideratione that there are many poor people who are not able to bestow upon themselves expenssis for curing them of several diseases by procuring to them potions of phisick, and understanding the guid experience and qualificatione of Dr. Mathew Birsban, doctour of phisick, they heirby nominatis and appoyntis the said Mr. Matthew Birsbane to be the *towne's phisitian*.

Dr. Brisbane was the son of the Rev. Matthew Brisbane, of Erskine, and came of an old Bishopton family. The next we hear of him is in 1682, when, “in answer to the

desyre of Mr. Matthew Birsbane, doctour of medicine, grantis libertie to put a tomb or buriall place in the High Kirk yaird."

Next year Dr. Michael Wallace was elected and chosen to be "toun's phisitian" in place of Dr. Brisbane, but this does not mean that Dr. Brisbane had paid the last debt to nature, and that the tomb in the "High Kirk yaird" had an occupant, as in connection with the Renfrewshire witches we hear not only of Dr. Brisbane but also of another old acquaintance, Mr. Harry Marshall, "apothecaire in Glasgow."

This was an extraordinary case, where a girl, Christian Shaw, evidently the subject of hystero-epilepsy, accused certain persons of bewitching her. Dr. Brisbane, in a signed attestation, says that when he was brought to the girl on 31st December, 1696, at first sight she appeared so brisk in motion, so florid in colour, so cheerful, and in a way so healthful, that he could scarcely be persuaded she had need of a physician, but within ten minutes he found himself obliged to alter his thoughts, for she rose from her seat and advertised that she was instantly to be seized with a fit, and according whereunto he observed a considerable distension in her left hypochondré which in a trice falling she was forthwith taken with horrid convulsive motions and heavy groans. He was frequently with her and observed her narrowly, so that he was confident she had no visible correspondent to subminister hair, straw, coal, cinders, hay, and such trash to her. He saw her also, when free of fits, suddenly seized with numbness, and this he solemnly declares himself to have seen and handled, and were it not for the hay, straw, &c., he should not despair to reduce the other symptoms to their proper classes in the catalogue of human diseases.

At the trial Dr. Brisbane, being adduced upon oath, adhered to his former subscribed attestation, and deponed that, in his opinion, the things mentioned therein did not proceed from natural causes arising from the patient's body.

I do not know when he died, but as late as 20th October, 1755, there appeared an advertisement in the *Glasgow Journal* that "several sorts of household furniture of very good kinds would be sold at Dr. Brisbane's house in the Stockwell on Monday, 3rd Nov. next."

Treasurer Robiesoune had a son, John Robiesoune, younger, who was appointed "toun's chirurgian" on 7th January, 1687, although three years previously the council had decided

to discontinue the official appointment, ordering that "any person who was unwell and deserved to be cured could apply to a magistrate who would recommend him to a physician for treatment."

Robiesoune, younger, however, died next year, and was succeeded by William Thomson. We come across Dr. Thomson once or twice. He is mentioned in 1704 in the dispute between the barbers and the surgeons, and in 1712 we find him seeking compensation from the corporation, because, in enlarging Gibson's Wynd, they had taken in a portion of ground which belonged to "umquhill John Miller" (to whom his children had succeeded as heirs). The result of his claim is not apparent, but I trust he was successful. He was a member of the Laigh or Tron Kirk, and was evidently the lessee of the "2^d termes at the trone and weigh-house," also of the "2^d termes payment at the fishmercat." The last we hear of Dr. William Thomson is in August, 1716, when he appears as an objector, being a heritor, to one George Brown using the ground contiguous to his tenement in the Trongate as a slaughter-house.

On a former occasion I gave you some examples of the quack advertisements which were common in old Glasgow periodicals. I desire just to add one or two more; they appeal to human credulity with all the force of their modern compeers. Whether it be Speediman's Stomach Pills: "One of the best remedies yet discovered for all complaints of the stomach and bowels. The virtues of these pills are so well known and will appear so clearly on triall that the pompous puffs and other mean, yet inciting methods—too often used—to recommend articles with false stories of surprising cures are rendered quite unnecessary." Or Dr. Hodson's Persian Restorative Drops at 10s. 6d. per bottle: "Young men, boys, ladies of weak nerves, and people who travel into warm climates are particularly recommended to an impartial trial of these certain cures." Spilsbury's Improved Drops, which seemed to cure anything; Rowley's Herb Snuff and Tobacco for weak eyes, deafness, and nervous complaints; Belton's famous British Oil, "which is an effectual remedy (under God) for many distempers incident to the human body;" then Andrew Gardner, at the "Golden Ball," a little above Bell's Wynd, sold the "famous annodyne necklace for breeding children's teeth."

In the *Glasgow Courant* for April, 1749, there appeared an advertisement, thus:

The Gentlemen, Ladies, Clergy, and all of literature and distinction are invited to the first lecture on the art of preserving sight and the changes in the eye from affections of the mind, etc., by John Taylor, Esq., Doctor of Physic, oculist to His Majesty; Fellow of Several Colleges of Physicians. The whole will be introduced by a Panegyrick in praise of sight and concluded with an oration on the excellency of this undertaking.

There was, I may add, the trifling professional advertisement regarding 162 persons to whom sight had been restored.

The last I intend to mention is this—rather a pompous introduction (*Mercury*, 17th June, 1784):

By Authority! The public are hereby informed that Dr. Edward Green, of the City of Durham, is come to Glasgow. *N.B.*—The Dr. performs all operations on the following terms of no cure no pay.

In the will of Robert Urie, a printer in the city, who died in 1771, I came across quite a number of practitioners who were indebted to him:

John Muir, surgeon,	.	.	.	who owed	£4	15	0
Dr. Robt. Marshall,	.	.	.	„	0	8	0
Dr. Peter Wright,	.	.	.	„	4	10	8
John Hardie, surgeon,	.	.	.	„	3	11	8
Jas. Parlane,	„	.	.	„	2	3	0
Wm. Miller, surgeon in Saltcoats,	.			„	2	19	3

Those accounts might have been for books bought or for printing cards or bills—if the ordinary surgeon had such a thing as a printed bill then, which I much doubt. That our predecessors had their own difficulty with these same little bills, also that they realised the need of union and collective bargaining—blessed phrase—is plain, by a series of advertisements in the *Courier*. The first is on 29th October, 1792:

The Physicians and Surgeons in Glasgow having experienced much inconvenience and loss from the long-delayed payment of their fees and accounts, and to remedy this as far as depends upon them, the surgeons have come to the unanimous resolution to give in their acts once a year, and the physicians expect, when there is no agreement for attendance throughout the year, to be paid for their trouble and advice upon their visits becoming no longer necessary.

Not only so, but there was evidently some attempt at concerted action, as at the same time the surgeons in Paisley and Dumbarton met and fixed—

1. Uniform prices for articles sold.
2. Uniform charges per visit.
3. Time at which visits had to be left.
4. That at proper intervals they shall meet and examine such accounts as have been too long due in their books and jointly take proper measures for the recovery thereof.

And now this finishes the superficial and somewhat scrappy survey of some of the conditions under which our remote predecessors conducted their professional duties. I have endeavoured to select certain portions from the mass of material garnered. No doubt those portions or items, when standing alone, convey little information of any value to us; but I ventured to think that a selection of what I considered essentials might be of interest to you, as affording material for thought, as indicating the status of our profession in the infant city, as showing that the practitioners of bye-gone Glasgow had their own problems to face, that they were willing to fight for the retention of their privileges even in connection with such a sordid affair as paying rates and taxes, as revealing the fact that they could take part in the public life of the burgh, and that at some time or another they found the need of closer professional co-operation and concerted action. To me these extracts really form the framework round which our imagination weaves a material body; and while I think that it is unprofitable to spend too much time on the past, still I am quite sure that now and again a retrospect is not altogether misspent time, even if the review of the past only enables us more clearly to see our way through what is happening to-day.





